UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

University of Toronto Wind Ensemble: *Trees and Machines*

Gillian MacKay, *conductor*

Saturday, October 14, 2023 at 7:30 pm | MacMillan Theatre, 80 Queen's Park, Toronto

PROGRAM

Flash!
Elaine Ross (b. 1966)

City Trees
Michael Markowski (b. 1986)

Coil
Steven Bryant (b. 1972)

Wilderness
Cait Nishimura (b. 1991)

INTERMISSION

Deciduous
Viet Cuong (b. 1990)

Steampunk Suite
Erika Svanoe (b. 1976)

I. Charlie and the Mechanical Man Marching Band
II. The Strange Case of Doctor Curie & Madam Hyde
III. Bertie Wells Attends Mr. Verne's Lecture on Flying Machines
IV. Barnum and Bailey's Tandem Bicycle

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

As part of the Faculty's commitment to improving Indigenous inclusion, we call upon all members of our community to start/continue their personal journeys towards understanding and acknowledging Indigenous peoples' histories, truths and cultures. Visit indigenous.utoronto.ca to learn more.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO WIND ENSEMBLE
Gillian MacKay, *conductor*

Flutes
Rowan Froh
Tina Jia
Josie Li
Megan Mahoney
Lauren Radeschi
Eleanor Song

Oboes
Dechen Fan
Sara Ko

Clarinets
Sophia Chen (bass)
Marco Ding
Farimah Khorrami
Andrzej Osko (bass)
Daniel Savin
James Shi
Niki Tang
Emily Zhao

Bassoons
Taran Massey-Singh
Grace Qiu
Jaclyn Yee

Saxophones
Kannan Bloor
Min Gu Kang
Blake Smith
Yunfei Xie

Piano/Keyboard
Sumi Kim

Harp
Eliza Fichialos

Horns
Ethan Chialtas
Ameilia Parks
Dia Tam *
Fabian Wiese

* guest musicians
^ managers

Trumpets
Kieran Booker
Kevin Hayward
Jayang Kim
Grace Locker
Daniel Rofaiel

Trombones
Duncan MacFarlane ^
Calvin Morais
Ian Tong (bass)

Euphonium
Daniel Collins

Tubas
Elizabeth Fair ^
Jack Shiels

Percussion
Amiel Ang
Randall Chaves Camacho *
Andrew Busch *
Nikki Huang *
Thomas Li *
Cassandra Wolff
Jeffrey Zhu

Bass
Abigail Cimicata

Laptop/video in *Coil*
Toby Moisey *

Tech Support
James Wu

BIOGRAPHY

Gillian MacKay is Professor of Music of the University of Toronto, where she conducts the Wind Ensemble and teaches conducting. Gillian has an active professional career as a conductor, adjudicator, clinician and trumpeter. She has conducted honour ensembles throughout Canada and the United States, and is Associate Conductor of the Denis Wick Canadian Wind Orchestra. Dr. MacKay has adjudicated Canadian band festivals at local, provincial, and national levels in Canada. She has conducted honour bands and judged competitions in the US, Singapore, Thailand, and Korea.

Dr. MacKay enjoys presenting clinics and workshops at provincial and state conferences in Canada and the United States, and is known for her work on the relationship between conducting and mime. Currently, she is investigating the application of the Michael Chekhov acting technique to movement and meaning in conducting. Recognized as a conducting pedagogue, Gillian leads the University of Toronto Wind Conducting Symposium each July, and has been the guest instructor at other symposia in Canada and the United States. Gillian holds degrees and diplomas from the University of Lethbridge, McGill University, the University of Calgary, and Northwestern University.

PROGRAM NOTES

Elaine Ross - *Flash!* (2004)

Flash! by Elaine Ross is a thrilling musical journey that ignites the concert experience with a burst of energy and excitement. This dynamic three-minute fanfare, designed in modified ternary form, captivates the audience's attention from the very first note. Be sure to pay attention to the fast articulated notes in the low brass section as they supply the persistent rhythmic drive throughout the piece. As the opening piece of the concert, Flash! sets the stage for the sonic adventure that lies ahead. Its exploration of changing meters, quartal and quintal sonorities, syncopation, and ostinato development invites the audience into a world of rhythmic complexity and musical intrigue. Ross also masterfully uses the hexatonic scale to invite the listeners into her distinctive harmonic language. It will go by in a flash!

Michael Markowski - *City Trees* (2012)

City Trees artfully juxtaposes the bustling rhythms of urban life with humanity's intrinsic connection to nature, a connection often sought to be preserved. Commissioned in 2012 by the New York City Lesbian and Gay Band Association to commemorate their 30th anniversary, this piece embodies a powerful message of courage and persistence. Inspired by Markowski's own journey from the arid expanses of Arizona to the vibrant tapestry of New York City, *City Trees* mirrors the courageous exploration of new worlds, the embrace of diverse cultures, and the nurturing of fresh ideas. Amidst the concrete confines of the city streets, the trees symbolize resilience, thriving despite their confinement. The music skillfully reflects this theme of resilience, with an underlying ostinato representing the ceaseless pulse of city life, driven by industrialization and the information age, while lyrical melodic lines embody the enduring hope and perseverance that nature instills in the human spirit. *City Trees* beautifully captures the dichotomy between the frenzy of modern urban life and our innate connection to nature, paying tribute to the inner strength of individuals and communities in the face of challenging circumstances. It honors the Lesbian and Gay Band Association's unyielding courage and 30-year journey, growing steadily at its own unique pace.

Cait Nishimura - *Wilderness* (2021)
The fascination with the natural world began in childhood for Cait Nishimura, and she soon became concerned about the harmful impacts of human activity on the environment. As old growth forests and essential ecosystems like wetlands were being replaced by housing developments and highways, Nishimura witnessed a surge of urbanization and the expansion of infrastructure, at the expense of pristine natural landscapes. Ultimately, Nishimura came to believe that art possesses the power to inspire and empower. Commissioned by the Midwest Band & Orchestra Clinic to celebrate their 75th anniversary, her composition *Wilderness* pays tribute to Earth's remaining wild spaces and those dedicated to their protection. It underscores the urgency of preserving our planet's remaining wilderness against the backdrop of historical environmental destruction. Through her music, Nishimura explores the emotions of an environmentalist, acknowledging the fragility of nature due to past industrial advancements. *Wilderness* serves as a compelling call-to-action, urging individuals to raise awareness about climate change—a global issue exacerbated by past and present industrial practices. It encourages reflection on humanity's relationship with the environment, emphasizing the vital balance between industrial progress and environmental preservation. Ultimately, the piece seeks to deeper respect for the stewards of our planet, both past and present, who have championed conservation efforts.

Steven Bryant - *Coil* (2014)
Few things have changed the world like electricity. Most notably credited for his invention of the first alternating current (AC) motor, Nikola Tesla's fantastical legacy is captured by composer Steven Bryant in his 2014 work, *Coil*. Tesla is also said to have the ability to visualize complex inventions and concepts in his mind. He claimed this to be a significant part of his creative process and allowed him to mentally construct and test inventions without the need for physical prototypes. *Coil* melds the worlds of music and technology and seamlessly blends the power of the wind ensemble with the inclusion of actual Tesla Coil samples and other electrical sources played by a keyboardist within the ensemble. The result is a groove-infused sonic tapestry that immerses the audience in a world of pulsating energy and technological wonder. At its core, the piece explores the sonic possibilities of Tesla's famed invention, the Tesla Coil. These mesmerizing, buzzing electrical sounds serve as the driving force behind the composition. As you listen to this intriguing work, allow yourself to be transported into Nikola Tesla's unique mind, and experience the synergy between music and technology, making for a truly electrifying musical journey.

Viet Cuong - *Deciduous* (2023)
Deciduous is a mesmerizing and introspective musical journey that delves into the profound cyclical nature of life, growth, and renewal. Cuong's composition is an exploration of the changing seasons, both in nature and within the human experience. Through a delicate interplay of musical textures and motifs, Deciduous captivates the listener with its beauty and emotional depth. Cuong shares these thoughts about the piece's inception: "For a long time after my father passed away, I felt like I had 'lost my leaves.' In the way that leaves harness light to create energy for trees and plants, I felt like I had so little left to harness creatively. Many days I feared those leaves would never grow back. After struggling for months to write, I finally found some healing while creating *Deciduous*." The piece begins with a sense of nostalgia, as Cuong revisits chord progressions that harken back to the comfort of childhood. These familiar themes serve as the foundation upon which the composition builds, much like the growth of a tree's branches and leaves over time. As the music progresses, Cuong adapts these motifs to explore new and intriguing textures, representing the growth and transformation that comes with adulthood and the passage of time. At a pivotal moment the music is stripped down, reflecting a moment of loss and vulnerability. It is in this moment of stark simplicity that the piece must find a

way to renew itself, much like the resilience and strength we discover within ourselves during times of adversity. *Deciduous* was commissioned by the Florida Bandmasters Association Premiered by the 2023 Florida All-State Symphonic Band.

Erika Svanoe - *Steampunk Suite* (2017)
Erika Svanoe's *Steampunk Suite* is a musical journey that flies “full steam ahead” to a captivating alternate history, where imagination reigns supreme and the Victorian era arises in a world of steam-powered technology. Each movement presents an imagined history of a person alive during the Victorian era, but the inspiration goes even further back into the First Industrial Revolution when the power of steam forever propelled the development of our world. Svanoe's composition pays homage to the musical giants of the time, incorporating elements from composers like Ives, Sousa, Satie, Karl King, Stravinsky, and Weill, with a playful nod to Khachaturian and Danny Elfman. Listen to the cakewalks, the marches, the waltzes; wait, is that *Daisy Bell?* These nostalgic melodies are intricately intertwined with the imagined sounds of clockwork machinery and steam-powered contraptions, creating a sonic landscape that is both familiar and fantastical. As a contemporary genre, Steampunk conjures visions of an alternate Victorian age filled with fantastical inventions and artistic styles, fuses technology and aesthetic designs inspired with 19th-century industrial steam-powered machinery. Svanoe's *Steampunk Suite* encapsulates this essence, inviting you to explore the intricate blend of history, technology, and creativity that defines the Steampunk movement. Allow the boundaries of your imagination to be pushed to the limits and prepare to embark on a musical adventure that transcends time and reality, as *Steampunk Suite* transports you to a world where the past and future collide in a symphony of imagination.

Program notes by James Wu and Toby Moisey

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